

EAST AND WEST SERIES

AN INTERPRETER OF THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

PRESENTED	9/223	Page
A Prophet of Compassion		1
By T. L. Vaswani		
How to Contact the Source of Power		7
By Henry Thomas Hamblin		
The Poor Man's Christ		12
By T. L. Vaswani		
The Way to God		15
The Fearless Guru		17
By T. L. Vaswani		
Happiness Is Within You		19
By J. P. Vaswani		
Daily Inspiration		27
Hanuman : Prince of Bhaktas		32

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PRESENTED

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 No. 9/22
 Shri Shri ...
A Prophet of Compassion*
 BANARAS.
 By T. L. VASWANI

Mahavira is one of the greatest heroes of Aryavarta. Five and twenty centuries ago he was born. His name continues to shine among the immortals of history.

The word "Mahavira" means, literally, "great victor." Mahaviras are the true supermen of history,—not supermen of egoism and violence, but supermen of purity, *tapasya* and love.

"As fire does not put out fire, so evil does not put out evil," was the note sounded by the great *rishi* of Russia, Tolstoy. And Tolstoy's doctrine is traced to the teaching of Jesus:—"Resist not evil!" Yet over five centuries before Jesus, the teaching of *ahimsa* (non-resistance, non-violence) was taught and practised by two Indian sages and *rishis*,—Gautama Buddha and Mahavira. The Jains worship Mahavira as Bhagawan, the Lord, the Blessed One.

What little I have learnt of Mahavira has impressed me much. His was a life of singular grace and singular beauty. A contemporary of the Buddha, he reminds one, again and again, of the Buddha's renunciation, the Buddha's *tapas*, the Buddha's love of humanity.

Mahavira was born about 599 B. C., in a town in Bihar, near Patna. His father was a Chief, a *kshatrya* named Siddhartha. His mother, queen

* April 4 is sacred as the birthday of Mahavira.

Trishala or Priya-karini, was a daughter of Chetaka, the head of the Republic of the Vajjis.

Mahavira, as a boy, is sent to school : they find he does not need school-masters. He has in his heart a wisdom which no schools may give. Like the Buddha, he is smitten with a longing to renounce the world. He lives up to the age of twenty-eight with his family. Then his father and mother pass away. He feels he must now enter the stream of *sanyasa* (renunciation). He goes to his elder brother for permission to renounce. "The wounds are yet fresh," says his brother to him; "wait!"

He waits for two years more. He is now thirty. Like Jesus, he feels he must renounce all and enter upon a ministry of service. Like the Buddha, he distributes his wealth among the poor. On the day he leaves his family, he gives over his kingdom to his brother, then he passes into a life of penance and prayer.

To the Buddha came illumination after six years of *sadhana* (spiritual discipline). To Mahavira comes illumination after twelve years of meditation and *tapas* (self-discipline). He attains wisdom-consciousness on the bank of the Rijikulo in the village Jrimbhika. He becomes, in the language of the books, "Tirthankara",—a word which I interpret to mean the "Perfect Man."

Then, like the Buddha, he goes upon his great mission of teaching. For thirty years, he moves from place to place. He preaches in Bengal and Bihar his great gospel of happiness. He takes his message even to savage tribes, unmindful of their cruel treatment to him. He goes on his mission to

Stravasti and the Himalayas. How beautifully calm and patient he remains in the midst of many troubles and persecutions!

A teacher, he is, also, an organiser, He has eleven chief disciples : over four thousand monks and laymen join the faith. Brahmins and non-brahmins are admitted to the fold. He is no believer in "caste." He passes away on the Diwali Day in 526 B. C., at the age of seventy-two, in Pavapuri (Bihar).

How beautiful the life of Mahavira! He goes from place to place to preach his doctrine, and many mock at him : he is silent! At meetings they disturb him, insult him : he is silent! A band of men beat him in the forest as he sits in meditation : he is silent! A disciple of his deserts him and goes about spreading evil reports against him : he is silent! He becomes a Mahavira, a great victor, a superman, because he develops *santi-shakti*, the power of peace.

His life influenced profoundly his followers. They carried his message, far and wide. It is said that Pyrrho, the Greek thinker, studied philosophy at the feet of Gymnosophists : and, as the name suggests, the Gymnosophists were Jain *Yogis*.

In his childhood he was named Vira. He was called Virdhamana. Later on, he was called Mahavira, "great hero." A story has it, that he was given this epithet when, playing with his friends, one day, he subdued with great dignity a big, black snake, by placing his feet on its hood. To me the story is a parable. For Mahavira has truly subdued the snake of passion. He was,

indeed, a great hero. He conquered *rāga* (passion) and *dvesha* (dispassion). The central note of his life was *virya*, vitality. It was a life of supreme *shakti*.

Modern India, too, needs heroes. Money or mere knowledge can do little. Our piteous need, today, is men of manhood,—men who, casting out fear from their hearts, would serve this ancient land. The heroism of Mahavira was reflected in his life and his teaching. It was a life of singular self-conquest : and his teaching was the bold one:—“Regard all creatures as thyself and harm no one!” In these words you have the double doctrine of *ahimsa*, positive and negative. The positive refers to the vision of unity:—See thyself in all. The negative grows out of it:—Harm no one. To see the Self in all is to refrain from injury to anyone. Harmlessness grows out of the vision of the One in all.

All life is sacred. So tear no leaf from its tree, crush no flower, harm no insect. Is it a foolish sentiment to treat insects, animals and birds with kindness? There was a time when it was thought foolish to treat “coloured” men as human beings! An Englishman in South Africa said the negro had no soul!

What is *ahimsa*? Harmony of my will-to-live with the others’ will-to-live. *Ahimsa* is true “sacrifice,” profound surrender of myself for the sake of life in others. *Ahimsa* is non-criticism of others, is forgiveness : I must not judge others, I must only judge myself. *Ahimsa* is *shakti*, true strength, which makes no noise, no fuss. *Ahimsa* is *seva* (service).

Do I hold property? It belongs to the community : it is with me as a trust for the service of society. Property may be given up or it may be increased, but in either case, it must be viewed mentally and used actually as belonging to the community. Often they who give up become egoistic. Objective giving up is not necessary : what is necessary is surrender of the subjective sense of "ownness," "mineness," "possession."

Ahimsa is a call to self-giving. Give yourself as a man to man, as a life-unit to all life. He who hath much, of him much is asked. Have you more than others in wealth; health, talents, success, strength, influence, happiness? Then must you give for others in a greater measure! Be an adventurer of sacrifice! Give yourself! Invest yourself and all you have in the Bank of Life!

The life and message of Mahavira emphasised three ideas. (1) *Brahmacharya*, which means, literally, walking with God. *Brahmacharya* is purity, is self-restraint. (2) *Anekantavada* or *Syadvada*. Mahavira taught that no one view of the universe could express the truth in its fullness : for Truth is *ananta* (endless). We have suffered much in recent years from strife and hate in the name of "creed." Creeds have created divisions and quarrels. Let a new conception of the spiritual life create a new unity, a new national life. For Truth is infinite. And religion was meant not to create discords and conflicts, but to teach humility and love. (3) *Ahimsa*. And *ahimsa*, Mahavira taught, is anything but inaction or cowardice. *Ahimsa* is something very positive. Indeed, it is something more even than virtue

It is a *shakti*, an energy. It is the energy of peace, the will-to-peace in a warring world.

I find the pages of history strewn with wreck and ruin. Wars! Destruction! Religious persecutions! Civilisations have failed. Power and pride shout in our fierce cry of progress. We have not carried the vision of *ahimsa* into our life. Our food, our commerce, our social life,—is there not more *himsa* than *ahimsa* in them? And what do we have in modern politics? Counsels of passion or the energy of *ahimsa*?

One thing I strongly feel : this civilisation of *himsa* (violence) must go. A brotherly civilisation must be built up. Hate will not help us. Today the nations spend the wealth of emotions in strife. We must bring God into national life. It is the power of the Spirit we need to rebuild humanity.

One of the remarkable sayings of Mahavira is:—"You are your own friend." Yes; and you are your own enemy. Be your friend! Do not be your enemies! We all are in search of happiness : then make others happy. This is the law. He who blesses others is blessed, and he who injures others is injured. Therefore practise *ahimsa* in your everyday life, and re-kindle once again the light of love in the world!

The essence of right conduct is not to *injure*. One should know only this, that non-injury is religion.

— JAIN SCRIPTURES

How to Contact the Source of Power

By HENRY THOMAS HAMBLIN

Power,—the real Spiritual Power,—comes through prayer and self-discipline. It does not come through talking, or reading books about Truth, or listening to sermons or lectures. It does not come through dreaming day-dreams, or through hoping, or through leaving the matter of our attainment to a Higher Power. The promise is that those who seek shall find, and that those who knock shall have the door opened to them.

We can become conscious of Power, and can be filled with Power, only through making contact with the Source of Power. We can make contact with the Source of Power only through the persistent and systematic practise of prayer and meditation upon the Scriptures. This must not be perfunctory, a sort of duty to be performed that is quite secondary to the duties, ambitions and activities of the external life. It must form the most important part of our life,—its main interest,—its centre, around which everything must rotate.

All our life rotates around our central thought, our chiefest interest. If we are to find God, if we are to know the Power of His Spirit, we must make our time of prayer and meditation the chief object of our life.

It is not possible to find the Power without work, effort, initiative, perseverance, determination, per-

sistence. It is useless for us merely to wish for it, or to hope for it, any more than it would be sufficient, if we wanted to become an accomplished musician, for us to wish to be one. Neither is it sufficient for us to be acquainted with all the theory and head knowledge of the subject, any more than it would be sufficient for us to know a great deal about the theory and history of music. To become an accomplished musician, a real musician, one must practise regularly, painstakingly and perseveringly, every day without fail. Everyone knows that the performance that we hear in the concert room that is so wonderful, and which is accomplished with such astonishing ease and facility, is the result of constant practice,—many hours every day, without fail. “Genius is the capacity for taking infinite pains.”

It is the same with the search for the Kingdom. Leroy Henry, the publisher of Jacob Beilhart's books (who has written some very clever little books himself, filled with humour and revealing to us, in a very amusing and yet cutting way, our own weaknesses and follies), pokes fun at the self-satisfied, self-assertive individual who thinks he possesses all wisdom, because he has taken a course in Popular Psychology at a cost of twenty-five dollars. It is all very funny, but all very true.

The great mysteries of life and eternity, the deep things of God, cannot be found through listening to lectures either of the “Complete Course in Wisdom for Twenty Five Dollars” variety, or the learned, profound, and extremely fine lectures on Philosophy of the late Lord Balfour. The way to the Kingdom of Power is through work.

There is no other entrance to any knowledge.

Everything worth having has to be worked for. It is impossible to get something for nothing. This applies particularly to the life of Power. The great secrets of God are not delivered up to unworthy hands, or to those who are not prepared and disciplined; but only to those who have been prepared and disciplined.

The Kingdom of God, and our search for it and its Power, must be put first and foremost. It must be the Central Point in our life. To this search and the practices by means of which it is prosecuted all things must be surrendered.

People write to me saying that they are so tired at the end of the day, they cannot meditate. George Muller spoke of a man (a type of an innumerable host) who worked such long hours in order to support his family (which, by the way, he did with great difficulty) that he was too tired to pray or to read the Word. Muller pointed out to the man that if he would work less hours, and spend a regular time in prayer and meditation upon God's Word, his spiritual life would flourish, his faith would grow, and he would be a better, happier, and more capable man altogether. Also, in addition, he would be more prosperous; for, said the wise man, it is not your work that maintains you, but the Lord.

George Muller himself, however, was faced with the same difficulty. He found that his strength was overtaxed, he suffered from pains in the head (probably due to nerve strain or neurasthenia) and he was generally in a bad way. His physicians advised him to do less,—to get up late and

to have a sleep in the afternoon.

This, of course, did not suit George Muller. He decided that he needed time in which to find God in the Secret Place, and meditate upon the Divine Scriptures. Of course, he was always praying for his work, for his orphans, for other people. He was also constantly preparing sermons, which necessitated the reading and study of the Bible. But none of this fed his own soul.

He came to the conclusion that his soul was starved, in spite of all his religious activities, and services and meetings, and in spite also of all his Bible study and prayers and prayer meetings. He also came to the conclusion that the early morning was the best time and the only time for the purpose. In the early morning the body is refreshed, the brain clear and invigorated. These were the hours, the best of the day, which must be given to the Lord, in order that he might meet the Lord, get to know Him and be refreshed by Him, and his soul fed and nourished in communion with Him.

So, George Muller decided against his physicians' advice, and instead of getting up later, rose earlier than previously. These early hours he gave entirely to the Lord. He devoted them entirely, solely and completely to the Secret Place and to meditation upon the Scriptures, and prayer and praise. He not only did not suffer through this curtailment of sleep and disobedience to the physicians' advice, but his health improved. He lost the pains in his head; he preached all over the world from the age of seventy to eighty-seven (and travelling was much more hazardous and

rigorous and trying in those days) and lived to be ninety-three years of age, when he died in harness. But more than all this, George Muller found that he had discovered the central vital source of all Power.

Through giving the best hours of the day to communion, prayer, meditation and finding the Secret Place, his soul was nourished, his faith strengthened, his powers greatly increased. Through this daily strengthening of the inner man, through the Power that came to him during his early morning exercises, George Muller became a much greater blessing to innumerable thousands than could ever have been the case otherwise.

If you have met a man who possesses spiritual Power, a Power that you can feel when in his presence, you have met one who spends the best hour or hours of the day in prayer and communion with God in the Secret Place. It is there that he receives the Power that enables him to move mountains of difficulty, and to achieve the apparently impossible.

The Power comes to man through work in the Secret Place. Let us, therefore, refrain from mere talk and intellectual study of religious things and, instead, faithfully spend the best part of the day in prayer, communion, and reflection and praise. It will mean some loss of sleep : but we shall never miss it, nor suffer through it. Rather shall we be strengthened and invigorated as never before.

—The Science of Thought Review.

The Poor Man's Christ*

By T. L. VASWANI

The name, which Krishna said was to him the dearest, was "*Daridra Narayana*," the "lover of the poor." And Jesus dearly loved to be called "O poor one!" To his disciples Jesus said, again and again:—"Love ye the poor if you will love me truly."

One day he struck the ground and picked up dust, then opened his hands. And behold! in one of his hands appeared gold, and in the other clay. Then turning to his disciples, he said:—"Which of the two is sweeter to your hearts?" And they said:—"Gold!" But Jesus said:—"Gold and clay are alike to me!"

As a school boy, I first heard of him from a friend who was a Catholic and a lover of Shankaracharya and the Vedanta. I felt the fascination of Jesus. As the years have passed, I have meditated on him, his life and crucifixion, his wisdom and his ascended glory.

"God is Love," he said, "the All-forgiving Father." To the Kingdom of the Father, the Kingdom of Love, he called all who heard him.

He claimed to be not a "leader" but a "servant." "The Kingdom of God," he said, "cometh by love and lowliness of mind." And in the Kingdom of the Spirit dwell not the worshippers of wealth,

*April 12 is Good Friday, the Day on which Christ was crucified.

not the proud of power, not the lovers of tumult and shows, but the poor in spirit, the "meek" and "humble," the cross-bearers who, through renunciation and suffering, rejoice in the New Life.

Of the Kingdom of God, Jesus spoke, again and again. His "pictures" of the Kingdom were drawn from nature and life. - In his "parables," you have the picture of the "sower," who went forth to sow, flinging seed on the gentle soil or the hard rock : you have the picture of the "mustard tree," whose seed is so little but whose branches are widely spread. You have the pictures of the "wandering sheep," and of the "good shepherd" who goes out to find the lost ones. You have the pictures, too, of the nets the "fisherman" shoots in the water to draw forth fish, great and small : so doth the Great Fisherman,—God,—throw out the net to draw us out of the waters of this world (*samsāra*) that we may, through the death of our little lives, enter into the larger life,—the true life,—of the Eternal.

Jesus taught, as Krishna taught:—"Do not sow desire in the heart! For desire is seduction!"

And Jesus taught, as all the Great Ones of Humanity have taught, the value of silence.

They asked Jesus:—"What shall we do to enter into the Kingdom?" And Jesus answered:—"Never say anything! Go into silence!"

"We, often," they said to him, "are unable to do that." And Jesus said:—"Then never say anything but what is good!"

"And who," they asked him, "is the nearest to God?" And he said:—"He whose silence is meditation, whose speech is ever about God and

the saints, and whose look is a tear!"

"By what sign," they asked him, "may we know that we are from you?" And he said:—"This one only sign, that ye love one another."

One day, they asked him:—"Who among men is truly wise?" And he said:—"Not he who talks wisely, but he who acts wisely."

Not without reason, are we told in the Christian Gospels, the multitudes, on seeing him, would collect round him and gaze at him, unable to take their eyes off him! A great English writer, Charles Kingsley, summed up the life of Jesus in a few simple words:—"Jesus, the poor man, who died for poor men!"

He poured the love of his heart upon the poor. In them he beheld the beauty of God and exclaimed:—"The whole world is full of God!" In them he beheld the deep humility of God.

When alone and in the depth of silence, I have, methinks, seen the Face of Christ in the village-folk, and on mountain-heights, on river-banks and in the forest, and in the little ones. And I have communed with him in the cottages of the poor and the lowly : and sometimes, methinks, I have seen him coming down from the heights,—wiping the perspiration from their brows.

In little acts of kindness, in little deeds of love, in the seemingly unspiritual things,—the common duties of life,—I have received his benediction. Meditating on him, my heart cried out:—"How may I bear witness to thee in daily life?" Methinks, I heard him say:—"Serve the poor with tears in your eyes!"

The Way to God

Asked if a person could realize God while leading the life of a householder, Sri Ramakrishna said:—

“Why not? Live in the world like a mud-fish. The mud-fish lives in the mud but itself remains unstained. Or live in the world like an unchaste woman. She attends to her household duties, but her mind is always on her secret lover.

“Do your duties in the world, fixing your mind on God. But this is extremely difficult. I said the other day:—‘Suppose a typhoid patient is kept in a room where there are jars of pickles and pitchers of water. How can you expect the patient to recover? The very thought of spiced pickles brings water to one’s mouth.’ To a man, woman is like that pickle. The craving for worldly things, which is chronic in man, is like the patient’s craving for water. There is no end to this craving. The typhoid patient says, ‘I shall drink a whole pitcher of water.’

“The situation is very difficult. There is so much confusion in the world. If you go this way, you are threatened with a shovel; if you go that way, you are threatened with a broom-stick; again, in another direction, you are threatened with a shoe-beating. Besides, one cannot think of God unless one lives in solitude. The goldsmith melts gold to make ornaments. But how can he do his work well if he is disturbed, again and again? Suppose you are separating rice from

bits of husk. You must do it all by yourself. Every now and then you have to take the rice in your hand to see how clean it is. But how can you do your work well if you are called away, again and again?"

"What then is the way, Sir?" he was asked. And Sri Ramakrishna said:—

"There is a way. One succeeds if one develops a strong spirit of renunciation. Give up at once, with determination, what you know to be unreal. Once, when I was seriously ill, I was taken to the physician, Gangaprasad Sen. He said to me:—'I shall give you a medicine, but you mustn't drink any water. You may take pomegranate juice.' Everyone wondered how I could live without water; but I was determined not to drink it. I said to myself:—'I am a paramahansa and not a goose. I shall drink only milk.'

"You have to spend a few days in solitude. Turn yourself into gold and then live wherever you please. After realising God and divine love, in solitude, one may live in the world as well. That is why I ask the youngsters to stay with me; for they will develop love of God by staying here a few days. After that they can very well lead the life of a householder."

When you find that the very mention of God's name brings tears to your eyes and makes your hair stand on end, then you will know that you have freed yourself from attachment to "lust and gold" and attained God.

— SRI RAMAKRISHNA

The Fearless Guru*

By T. L. VASWANI

Three centuries have passed, since Guru Gobind Singh wrought the wonder of his life. A Brother of the poor and persecuted, he became a Saviour of Hindusthan, a Liberator of India.

I marvel at his greatness. His life was brief. Born in 1666, he passed on in 1708, at the age of forty-two. He built the Free Khalsa State in the love of God and man. In a letter to his opponent, the Moghul king of India, Aurangzeb, the great Guru said :—"You look to your kingdom and wealth : I turn to the immortal kingdom of God!"

The great Guru came in a period of darkness and despair in our history. One prayer, one cry and one curse against the tyranny of the State filled India, from end to end. Aurangzeb was simple and pure in private life : but he had a sectarian mind. He thought of winning heaven by converting Hindus to Islam : and he came to believe in conversion by force. Much did the Hindus suffer. Guru Gobind Singh was one of those truly great ones who appear, again and again, in history, to pour out their strength as a sacrifice to nourish the weak and needy.

Like Guru Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh drew together all the castes into one brotherhood. And

*April 13 is the anniversary of the founding of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh.

the rich and the poor combined to form one fraternity, one mighty union of service and sacrifice,—a living witness to one God. Guru Gobind Singh's dream, in building the Khalsa, was this divine dream of building a new race of humanity nourished by love.

Simple rules of life did Guru Gobind Singh give to the Khalsa whom, indeed, he loved with the love of his Mother Heart. Some of these rules were :—

*Eat little,
Sleep little,
Love compassion,
And serve the poor!*

*

*Forget not this,—
Thy home, my child!
Is not a palace,
But a forest, a tapobana!
So live as an anchorite at heart!*

Guru Gobind Singh dedicated his life to the service of the poor. He stood up,—in courage unsurpassed in the history of our nation,—to challenge a power which many thought was omnipotent. Wounded was he, again and again, in his fight for India's freedom,—the fight for the poor and forlorn. But he rose again and he fought again. The fear of fear fell from him. For the flame of His Presence touched his heart, and he declared:— "His Grace hath made me fearless!"

Guru Gobind Singh hath written his name in sacrifice. It is a name which shines as a star in Heaven.

Happiness Is Within You !

By J. P. VASWANI

He was a young man,—a graduate of an Indian University. Do what he will, he lost job after job, and was reduced, again and again, to utter poverty. Not unoften, he found it difficult to procure food for his famished wife and children. On top of it, he was afflicted with an incurable disease. He felt like one shipwrecked : and there were times when he wished for death to come and grant him release from the agonies of a frustrated life.

One day, as he wandered aimlessly through the streets of his town,—like a dead leaf borne on the autumn-wind,—he passed by a temple. And floating on the breeze there came to him the words of a song:—

*O child of God !
Arise ! Awake ! Breaking thy slumber,
Go forth to fulfil the destiny of thy life !
Thou art not a slave of circumstances :
Thou art the builder of thy fate !
Behold ! the very stars are eager
To serve thee !*

Was the song being sung for him? Word after word sank into his heavy-laden heart. And, irresistibly, he felt drawn to the temple gate. He entered the “sanctuary” and quietly sat in a corner. Soon the song came to a close : it was followed

by *kirtan*,—brothers and sisters singing together in chorus a few simple words:—

*O Friend of the forsaken and forlorn !
At thy Lotus-feet I cast my cares :
And my refuge I seek in Thee !*

The lines were sung, again and again, in devout fervour. Our friend joined in the singing. And as the pitch of the *kirtan* rose, he forgot himself,—his worries and woes, his agony and anguish,—and for the first time, in some years, knew what it was to feel happy and blithe as a song-bird.

Evening after evening, he came to join in the worship and *kirtan*. It gave a new tone to his life. The pattern of his mind changed : his thoughts became positive, vital. His health improved. He became a new man,—loving, trusting, true! And, today, this young man,—no longer young in years, for he is over fifty,—is at the head of a big commercial firm with God as his “senior partner.” More than half of the profits,—they run into five figures,—he sets apart for the “service of God and His suffering creation.”

We are, most of us, creatures of the mind. And the mind is unsteady, fickle, restless, wayward as the wind. The mind sits over us as a tyrant and will not let us rest in peace. That man is truly happy who has broken the thralldom of the mind,—truly happy, because he is truly free. The mind of such an one becomes his friend, a co-partner in the constructive, creative tasks of life. In the case of so many of us, alas! the mind is an enemy, a despot. Held fast in its grip, we feel miserable : and we feel utterly helpless.

Significant are the words of Madam Blavatsky:—
The mind is a good servant, but a cruel master.”

The other day, a grown-up sister came to me and said:—“I am tormented by thoughts of jealousy : and I can bear it no longer. I want to end my life.” As she spoke, her eyes were flooded with tears.

I said to her:—“Sister, life is endless! It cannot be ended. Life goes on even after the body drops down. And your hell you will carry with yourself, even if you finish with the body. So, why not face the issue now? Why not make an earnest effort to convert your hell into a heaven of peace and joy and bliss?”

“Is that possible?” she asked in wonder.

And I said to her:—“All that God asks of us is sincerity. Relax yourself and radiate love and good-will to her of whom you feel jealous. Think of her as a friend and pray that Divine Love may pour His choicest benedictions on her.”

She relaxed her body. And together the two of us prayed. After some minutes of silence, she opened her eyes : she no longer appeared agitated. And she said to me:—“For a long time I have not felt as I feel now. I am at peace. True it is that my happiness does not depend on anything outside of me : it is a product of my own *inner* attitude.”

And I whispered to her the immortal words of the Buddha:—“It is good to tame the mind and to guard one’s thoughts. A tamed mind and thoughts well guarded bring happiness.”

Much of our restlessness would vanish if we could but tame the mind. Not many of us seem

to realise yet the part which the mind plays in our daily lives. As a man thinks, so he becomes. Significant are the words of the *Dhammapada*:—"All that we are is the result of what we have thought; it is founded on our thoughts and is made up of our thoughts." One reason why the modern world has gone astray is that it lays undue emphasis on the "work" aspect of life. Work has its place in life : but more important than "work" is "thought." Take care of your thoughts! Every thought is a force which we generate for good or evil.

Some one may well remark, thoughts come to us from goodness knows where. They overwhelm us : and we feel helpless. Is it our fault that evil thoughts come to us, from time to time?

No, it is not our fault if evil thoughts come to us. But it is our fault if we permit them to stay in our mind and tear into bits the fabric of good life which we may have gradually built. As soon as an undesirable thought seeks entry into our mind, we should, with all our might, throw it out. Once an evil thought is allowed to enter the mind, it poisons the whole system, paralysing the limbs, holding us captive in its relentless clutches. In one of the sayings of Judaism, we read:—"Temptation is at first like a passerby, then like a lodger, and finally like the master of the house."

Behind every evil thought is an evil force. When we permit evil thoughts to invade us, we open ourselves to the influence of dark powers. We become their victims and before we know it, we create "hell" for ourselves.

If we think good thoughts,—thoughts of love and compassion, of beauty and joy, of faith and freedom, of peace and wisdom,—we invite to ourselves good forces, forces of light, and, in that measure, we create “heaven” around ourselves.

“Heaven” and “hell” are of our own making. By thinking “heavenly” thoughts, we get into touch with “heavenly” forces and we feel happy and spread around us the sunshine of joy.

All we need to do is to raise our consciousness to the realm of infinite peace and calm, beauty and joy, truth and holiness,—the realm where God dwells in the endlessness of bliss. This, however, is not an easy task for the beginner. If he succeeds in lifting himself up to this plane even for a few seconds at a time, it will be regarded as an achievement. Once a person has this truly wonderful experience,—for howsoever short a period,—he knows that its value and worth is more than all the wealth of the world. It is the experience of true freedom,—freedom from the cage of flesh, liberation from the prison of desires, the thralldom of the lower self. It is like flying in an attenuated atmosphere,—unfettered and free.

To those of us who cannot reach such heights, the following suggestions may be found helpful.

1. Perhaps, the simplest and most efficacious method of escaping the lower self is that of *kirtan*. Whenever two or three gather together, let them sing in chorus the Name Divine and, in the Name, lose themselves, drown themselves. Sing in love : sing with devotion. This method is so simple that often its importance is overlooked. But it

is one of immense value to us all.

Are our homes breaking? Is our community crumbling? Are nations at war with each other? The cure of these and other ills is *kirtan*. O pilgrims on the Path! get together and form *kirtan*-bands. You will sanctify your own lives : you will purify,—as did Sri Chaitanya, centuries ago,—the atmosphere of your town and country : you will release forces for the healing of the human race.

2. As you wake up in the morning, breathe out an aspiration of purity, of love, of joy, of peace, of humility, of trust,—any aspiration that may express your inmost need. Repeat this aspiration as often as you can during the day, even in the midst of your work.

I know of a young man who, in the years of his adolescence, was troubled, again and again, by violent storms of passion. He repeated the words :—“Make me a child of Light, ever pure and bright!” He repeated this line,—which, to him, was sacred as a *mantra*,—some hundreds of times a day. And as he repeated the words, he imagined God in the form of a Great Moon radiating to him cooling vibrations of purity. He persisted in the practice for six months : the day came when he became pure as a pearl. And, today, he can safely walk through objects of lust with no feeling of lust but with purity in his eyes and love in his heart.

3. As you retire at night, read a little from the life or teaching of a saint, a *bhakta*, a man of God. This has a purifying influence on the mind and, consequently, on one's dream-con-

sciousness. I have found the following books specially helpful:—*The Imitation of Christ*, by Thomas A' Kempis; *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, by "M"; and Beloved Dadaji's (Sri T. L. Vaswani's) *Gita : Meditations and Thus Have I Learnt*.

4. When evil thoughts come to you, do not struggle with them. The more you struggle, the more you will strengthen them. The best way to face evil thoughts is to let them alone and to think divine thoughts. Light dispels darkness. Every good thought is as a ray of light which clears the dark clouds of evil thinking.

5. Keep yourself relaxed at all times,—both in body and in mind. Work with unhasting speed : and speak gently, sweetly, with love and understanding. Above all, let nothing disturb your inner peace. Remember, work of the true type,—creative work,—is performed only when your heart is at rest. Glide very gently, very quietly from one task to another,—taking time to rest and pray between. Our activities take us away from the Peace of God. In the midst of our duties let us pause for a while, again and again, and enter into the Rest and Joy of God.

So many, alas! spend their life in a self-created "hell," while it is within their power to live a life of heavenly joy. It must not be forgotten, however, that "heaven" is not the goal of life. Beyond both "hell" and "heaven" must we go to abide in the Eternal. This "abiding" is the state of "contemplation" at which we arrive after the "self" is dead, the "ego" is annihilated. It is the unitive life of Love. It is the life of him

who exclaims with the great mystic, Rabia:—

*Beloved !
If I come to Thee
To be saved from the fires of hell,
Let me burn in hell !*

*And if I come to Thee
To gain the joys of Paradise,
Let the gates of Paradise
Be shut against me !*

*But if I come to Thee
For Thine own sake, Beloved !
Keep me not away from Thee.*

*So bless me that I may abide,
For ever and evermore,
In unbroken communion
With Thy Eternal Beauty !*

Blessed is the man who aspires to live in unbroken communion with the Lord. He has learnt the art of maintaining the interior peace in the midst of adverse circumstances. Living in a world of disharmony and discord, of misunderstanding and mistrust, he builds his own harmony by keeping his ears attuned to Heaven's music. To such a man each new day is as a wondrous sunrise gift from God. He moves through life in the fullness of joy,—the joy of the man who knows that every little detail of his life is planned by the love and wisdom of God. Oh! the joy, the beauty, and the wonder of a God-guided life!

Daily Inspiration

THE WISDOM OF SRI RAMA*

April 1 **The Pure in Heart**

Blessed are the pure in heart : for they see Me in the flow of all phenomena!

April 2 **The Way to God**

Look thou on all with equal eye; renounce thou all desire; and in thy heart harbour thou neither sorrow nor fear!

So mayst thou abide in My heart, as abides treasure in the thoughts of an avaricious man.

April 3 **Secret of Achievement**

They in whose hearts dwells the aspiration for the good of others find nothing in the world too hard to win.

April 4 **Worse Than Hell**

O God! preserve us Thou from the company of the vicious and the wicked!

Better to live in Hell than in the company of those who desert Thee, Lord!

April 5 **Transformation**

Is he an enemy of all creation?

Let him not despondent be! But let him come to Me!

Let him look to Me for refuge, renouncing

*April 1 is sacred as the Rāmanaumi,—the birthday of Sri Rāma, India's first *avatar* of *shakti*. In this section have been brought together some of the "sayings" of Sri Rama as given in Tulsi's *Ramayana*. The "sayings" have been rendered into English by Beloved Dadaji,—Sri T. L. Vaswani.

pride and guile : and speedily shall he be transformed into a saint of God!

April 6

Barren Soil

To speak of wisdom to one absorbed in thoughts of "self" is to sow the seed in a barren soil!

April 7

Maya Incarnate

Lust, wrath, greed and pride,—all the passions form a formidable army!

And amongst them all the most dangerous is the woman gone astray : she is *māyā* incarnate!

April 8

Be Brave

Are thy troubles mountain-high? Be brave! And even if they be as Mount Sumeru, regard them as no more than a particle of dust!

April 9

A True Friend

Here are the marks of a true friend : he leads thee away from the path of evil and summons thee ever to set thy foot on the path of righteousness! And he loves thee a hundred-fold in time of trouble.

April 10

A Real Hero

He who conquers the woman's wiles is, verily, a mighty warrior, a victor whom no crisis will find unprepared.

April 11

Three Enemies

Three enemies there be of might and strength:—(1) lust, (2) wrath, and (3) greed. Verily, these overthrow, in the twinkling of an eye, the very *sadhus* and sages of the *tapobana*.

In desire and pride is the power of greed; the power of lust lies in the woman's wiles; and the power of wrath is in harsh, unprofitable words.

April 12 **Pointed Knives**

A dishonest servant, a niggardly king, a faithless wife, and a treacherous friend,—these four cut the heart like pointed weapons.

April 13 **Weep Not Over The Dead**

Earth, water, fire, ether and air,—of these five is this body built.

And when the body falls, it lieth asleep. But the soul is undying : the soul sleepeth not but is awake, and to the Immortal speeds on!

For whom, then, dost thou weep?

April 14 **The Holy One**

The swarms of doubts and difficulties disappear when thou dost find a holy one,—a God-intoxicated Guru, wisdom's child,—humble, upright, a burning torch of the Beautiful!

April 15 **Pure and Passionless**

On barren ground grass grows not, though it rain! And passion comes not to birth in the heart of God's devotee.

April 16 **Wisdom**

Wise men forsake all thought of personal possession.

April 17 **The Devotee**

The devotee who places his trust in God and none but God is ever pure and bright as the cloudless sky.

April 18 **Happiness**

Those who take refuge in God without let or hindrance are happy as the fish when the water is deep.

April 19 **The Sight of a Pure Man**

As in the night the moon dispels the autumn heat, so is sin dispelled,—abolished,—by the sight

of a man, pure as the moon,—holy, holy, holy
as the beauty of Heaven!

April 20

Ever Faithful

Sons and riches, wives, houses and families come
and go, in this fleeting world of flux and decay.

Not so a brother : he is ever faithful and true!

April 21

Fellowship of the Saints

The fellowship of the saints is the right way to
liberation. But the company of the impure is
the road which leads, inevitably, to birth after
birth in a series which seems endless!

April 22

Sensual Pleasures

Blessed are they who are born as men. But if
they are addicted to sensual pleasures, they sur-
render their understanding to enjoyment : they
drink poison instead of nectar!

April 23

An Easy Path

The way of devotion (*bhakti*) to Me is an easy
path and leads to bliss,—so say the Puranas and
the Vedas.

The way of knowledge is hard to pursue and
there are many obstacles in the path.

With infinite trouble, indeed, doth a man find
the way of knowledge, yet is he not dear to Me if
he lack faith (*shraddha*)!

April 24

Blest Amongst Men

Here are the principles of conduct which win
My favour:—to bear no grudge against anyone,
to pick up no quarrel with others, and to hope for
nothing and to fear nothing.

April 25

Substance of the Veda

There is no spiritual act like doing good to others
and no vileness like doing them harm.

This is the doctrine of the Veda and the Purana.

April 26

My Best Beloved

I regard with equal compassion, with love spontaneous, all creatures that are, be they beasts or gods or men or demons. For the entire universe is My vesture,—the Robe of the One Real,—a messenger of His grace and love!

Among them all he who forswears pride and trickery and worshippeth Me in thought and word and deed, is most dear of all to Me.

April 27

One Thing Needful

Forsake all else, my child! and worship only the Eternal Beautiful.

April 28

Rely on Me!

Forget not, My child! that those who worship Me, relying on none else, I ever guard as a mother guards her child.

April 29

Dear to the Lord

That *bhakta* is dear to Me who finds in Me alone his shelter and his salvation.

His faith never wavers. Verily, he is a servant of all creatures and all things that are! He lives in the realisation that God is the one Master of all that lives and moves in time and space!

April 30

The Life Heroic

In the dreamland of the world, there is but one reality,—the worship of Hari.

The world,—the whole world,—is a dream. But the dream calls us to adventures of the Life Heroic!

The way of the Lord is for heroes, not cowards. Offer your life, your all! Then take the Name of Rama if, indeed, you will enter His Kingdom.

Hanuman : Prince of Bhaktas*

Have you seen a moth? It sees the light and loves it. So great is the love of a moth for the light that it moves on, coming nearer and nearer to the light, until it enters into the light and is consumed. Never again does it come back from light to darkness. The moth is a true lover, a true *bhakta*. The true *bhakta* of God, the lover of God, devotes his whole life to God and God only. The true *bhakta* thinks of God, dreams of God, drinks in God, and every moment cares for nothing else. The true *bhakta* is in God absorbed!

Hanuman was a *bhakta* of Sri Rama. One day Hanuman was asked:—"How old is the moon today?"

Hanuman answered:—"What do I know of the moon? I know nothing about the days of the week. I know nothing of the position of the stars. I know nothing about the changes in the movements of the moon. I only know the lotus feet of Sri Rama,—my Lord and my Master!"

What beautiful words! Hanuman was a *bhakta* of Sri Rama. He is revered as the prince of *bhaktas*. In his heart, he worshipped Sri Rama : and in the whole world, he saw Sri Rama and Sri Rama only. Blessed was Hanuman!

—From Sri T. L. Vaswani's "Little Talks."

* April 6 is the sacred Hanuman Jayanti,—the birthday of Sri Hanuman.

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